

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LENINGRAD 1969

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SREF, CVIS, OGEN, UR
SUBJ: LENINGRAD JEWISH EMIGRATION SCENE: FALL 1976

REF: A. LENINGRAD 1934 B. LENINGRAD 1807
C. LENINGRAD 1588 D. LENINGRAD 1587 E. LENINGRAD 1586
F. LENINGRAD 1540 G. LENINGRAD 1409

1. SUMMARY: LENINGRAD REFUSENIKS HAVE ENDED THE AUTUMN WITH THEIR HOPES AND THEIR LEVEL OF ACTIVITY SOMEWHAT HEIGHTENED. WHILE THE SIZE OF THE REFUSENIK COMMUNITY STILL CONTINUES TO GROW, IT IS SMALLER THAN THE REFUSENIKS THOUGHT BEFORE THEY UNDERTOOK A RECENT CENSUS. IN ADDITION, THEY PAY AS MUCH ATTENTION TO THE NUANCES OF THE OVIR'S ACTIVITY AS TO THE ACTUAL NUMBERS OF REFUSALS AND PERMISSION OF EMIGRATION PEITIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. SINCE SEPTEMBER WHEN THE EPSHTEIN AND RAINUS FAMILIES RECEIVED PERMISSION TO EMIGRATE, THE FORTUNES OF THE LENINGRAD JEWISH REFUSENIK COMMUNITY EXPERIENCED FIRST A LAG AND THEN AN UPWARD MOVEMENT. NO REFUSENIKS RECEIVED EXIT PERMISSION UNTIL AFTER MID-NOVEMBER. SINCE NOVEMBER 19 EIGHT FAMILIES HAVE BEEN GIVEN PERMISSION TO EMIGRATE. THE TOTAL OF NEW AND REPEATED REFUSALS SINCE RAINUS AND EPSHTEIN'S DEPARTURE IS 15 FAMILIES. OF THESE 9 ARE FIRST-TIME REFUSALS. HEADS OF FAMILIES WHICH HAVE RECEIVED EXIT PERMIS- SION DURING REPORT PERIOD: YEVGENIY ABEZGAUZ, MARK FREIDIN, IOSIF KHOROSHANSKIY, LAZAR YAKOVLEVICH
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LIBERMAN, (FNU) MALINSKIY, ANDREY RUKHIN, ARON

TOMCHINSKIY, YAKOV ARONOVICH VINKOVETSKIY. THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN REFUSED: SERGEY ALIEVSKIY, FELIX ARONOVICH, IL'YA DAVIDOVICH ESTERKIN, ALBERT ERENFROKHT, KARL SAMOYLOVICH GRINBERG, IGOR IKHIMOVICH INBERG, PETERIS MEDIN'SH, SOFIA DAVIDOVNA MOVSHINA (SISTER OF ESTERKIN), GRIGORIY VLADIMIROVICH RUKIN, VALERIY SIGAL, VALENTIN SIMANOVSKIY, POLINA SORETS, IOSIF ISSAKYEVICH TSIRULNIKOV, ALEKSANDR YAMPOLSKIY, AND YAKOV YOFFE. INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE FOR WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 10.

3. ALTHOUGH THE TOTAL SIZE OF THE REFUSENIK COMMUNITY HAS EDGED SLIGHTLY UPWARD, LOCAL REFUSENIKS ARE HEARTENED. THEY HAVE DISCOVERED IN THEIR EFFORT TO BRING THEIR STATISTICS UP TO DATE THAT THEIR GROUP NOW NUMBERS 87, RATHER THAN 100 FAMILIES, AND THE SUDDEN SPATE OF PERMISSIONS GRANTED LOOKS GOOD TO THEM AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND. COMMENTED ONE SOURCE, QTE THE ICE IS MOVING UNQTE. THE COMPLISITION OF THE GROUP OF THOSE GRANTED PERMISSION ALSO GIVES HOPE. IN ADDITION TO ACTIVIST-ARTIST-REFUSENIK ABEZGAUZ, IT ALSO INCLUDES L. YA. LIBERMAN, WHO, HAVING BEEN A REFUSENIK SINCE 1969, WAS THE SENIOR AMONG THE GROUP. VINKOVETSKIY TOO IS CONSIDERED AN "OLD REFUSENIK." EVEN MORE SIGNIFICANTLY FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW, LIBERMAN IS THE LAST OF THE REFUSENIKS OF A "NON-RETURNEE" FAMILY, I.E., A FAMILY THOUGHT TO BE IN PARTICULAR DISFAVOR BECAUSE OF THE DEFECTION ABROAD OF ANOTHER FAMILY MEMBER. THE EARLIER CASES OF NON-RETURNEE FAMILIES OBTAINING EXIT PERMISSION WERE POLINA EPELMAN TWO YEARS AGO AND GREGORIY SOKIRIANSKIY LAST SUMMER (REFTEL F).

4. TWO OF THE PERMISSION-GRANTED CASES INVOLVED PERSONS WHO HAVE BEEN IN REFUSENIK STATUS A VERY SHORT TIME: MALINSKIY HAS BEEN A REFUSENIK FOR ONLY ABOUT SIX MONTHS: KHOROSHANSKIY, WHO RECEIVED PERMISSION DEC. 3, HAD JUST RECEIVED A REFUSAL IN NOVEMBER.

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5. THE FACT THAT ONE RECENT REFUSAL WAS ISSUED TO A NATIVE RUSSIAN, V.V. KOROLEV, WHO WISHED TO GO TO THE U.S., MAY INTRODUCE A NEW ELEMENT OF AMBIGUITY AND INTEREST INTO REFUSENIK POLITICS. IT HAS RECENTLY BECOME OBVIOUS THAT INTEREST IN EMIGRATION IN LENINGRAD IS CONFINED NEITHER TO ISRAEL AS A DESTINATION NOR TO JEWS AS A NATIONAL GROUP. A JEWISH ACQUAINTANCE WHO HAS A RELATIVE IN THE U.S. AS WELL AS ONE IN

ISRAEL FACES A DIFFICULT DECISION AS HIS TURN TO PRESENT HIS PETITION TO EMIGRATE COMES UP ONCE AGAIN IN JANUARY. IN AN ADMITTEDLY UNREPRESENTATIVE THREE-DAY PERIOD LAST WEEK, POST RECEIVED ENQUIRIES ABOUT EMIGRATION TO THE U.S. FROM FOUR PERSONS, ONLY ONE OF WHICH COULD BE IDENTIFIED DEFINITELY AS A JUEW. THE TWO WHO SHOWED UP IN PERSON WERE BOTH RUSSIANS. A CALLER FROM RIGA CITED THE HELSINKI ACCORDS IN SUPPORT OF HIS ENQUIRY. ONE VISITOR CITED GENERAL DISAFFECTION AS MOTIVATING HIS DESIRE TO EMIGRATE AND SAID THERE ARE MANY MORE LIKE HIM. AN ACQUAINTANCE REPORTS THAT A LADY CUSTOMS WORKER WHO SPEEDILY PROCESSED THE CUSTOMS INSPECTION OF A FRIEND WHOM HE WAS SEEING OFF ON A FLIGHT ABROAD REPLIED TO AN OFFER OF REWARD WITH QTE NO THANKS, JUST SEND ME A VYZOV ENDQTE.

6. TO SOME EXTENT THE STATE ENCOURAGES THIS POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS DEVELOPEMENT BY GIVING EXIT PERMISSION TO NON-JEWS, SOMETIMES COUNTING THEM AS "JEWS". POST HAS HEARD OF ARTISTS WHO HAVE LEFT POSING AS JEWS AND HAS HEARD ALSO THAT ONE OF CURRENT LENINGRAD DISSIDENT LEADERS, YULIYA VOSNESENSKAYA, WHO IS NOT A JEW, HAS BEEN OFFERED A VISA TO ISRAEL. AT THE SAME TIME, AUTHORITIES WISH TO KEEP A BRAKE ON THIS DEVELOPMENT AS WELL THEY MIGHT. OF THE TWO RUSSIAN APPLICANTS, ONE WAS FIRST INTERCEPTED AND THEN, AFTER THE INTERVIEW, TAKEN AWAY BY SOVIET AUTHORITIES. THE OTHER CALLED CONGEN AND ASKED TO WITHDRAW HIS APPLICATION.

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INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LENINGRAD 1969

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7. THE SPIRITS OF THE REFUSENIKS ARE AFFECTED BY OVIR BEHAVIOUR IN OTHER WAYS THAN SIMPLY VACILLATING BETWEEN HOPE AND DESPAIR. THE AMBIGUITY OF OVIR DECISIONS GIVES A SENSE OF BEING INVOLVED IN A LOTTERY WITH WHICH SOME LOCAL WOULD-BE OVIROLOGISTS CAN BARELY COPE. DOES IT MATTER WHETHER ONE IS AN OLD OR NEW REFUSENIK, AN ACTIVIST OR NOT? IS THERE AN ARBITRARY WAITING PERIOD OR IS THERE NOT?-- THEY WONDER. QTE WHY HE (ABEZGAUS) AND NOT ME? ENDQTE, ASKS A SOURCE WHO HAS HIMSELF DONE HIS 15 DAYS FOR THE "HOOLIGANISM" OF PARTICIPATING IN A DEMONSTRATION AT OVIR. ANOTHER CHEERFULLY NOTES THAT ALREADY FOUR YEARS HAVE PASSED OF THE TEN-YEAR PERIOD WHICH AUTHORITIES SAID WOULD BE NEEDED FOR THE "DECLAS-SIFICATION" OF HIS SECRETS. A THIRD SIMPLY LIVES QUIETLY BETWEEN HIS BI-WEEKLY TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS WITH HIS FAMILY IN CHICAGO. A FOURTH WHO HAS APPARENTLY GIVEN UP GOING TO THE TROUBLE OF SUB-MITTING PETITIONS SIMPLY SHRUGS OFF THE ENTIRE PROBLEM WITH UNACCOUNTABLE GOOD HUMOR. FOR HIM THE ENTIRE OVIR PROCESS SEEMS ABSURD, AND DESPITE HIS HIGHLY TECHNICAL EDUCATION, HE GOES CHEERFULLY ABOUT HIS NEW WORK OF SELLING INSURANCE.

8. OVIR AUTHORITIES' BEHAVIOUR ENCOURGAGES THEIR REFUSENIK CLIENTS' BEMUSEMENT BY THEIR BEHAVIOUR AS WELL AS BY THEIR DECISIONS (WHICH SOURCES ASSURE ARE IN ANY CASE NOT THEIRS). ONE NEVER KNOWS WHEN HE AND HIS ENTIRE FAMILY WILL BE SUMMONED, AND WILL

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HOPEFULLY TROOP DOWN TO OVIR JUST TO BE TOLD THAT A PETITION (WHICH HE MAY NOT EVEN HAVE SUBMITTED) HAS BEEN REJECTED: THIS DECISION THEN CAN BE REVERSED WITHIN A MONTH. ONE LOCAL REFUSENIK WAS SUMMONED AFTER FILING A PETITION AND ASKED WHETHER HE HAD CHANGED HIS MIND RECENTLY--NO* WHY? WELL, PERHAPS YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES HERE OR CONDITIONS IN ISRAEL HAVE CHANGED. NO, NOTHING HAS CHANGED. WELL, WE HAVE NOT CHANGED OUR MINDS EITHER--ANOTHER REFUSENIK, WHO DID INDEED OBTAIN PERMISSION AT SUCH A SESSION, WAS TREATED THUS: GENERAL BAKHVALOV, THE LOCAL DEPUTY MVD CHIEF, TURNED TO COL. BOKOV AND ASKED IN MOCK SERIOUSNESS, "WHAT DO YOU SAY, SHALL WE LET HIM GO?" WHY NOT, CONCEDED BOKOV. ABEZGAUZ REPORTEDLY IMPORTUNED AN OVIR OFFICIAL TO PERMIT HIS FRIEND, ABA TARATUTA TO LEAVE AS FOLLOWS: LET HIM GO. YOU DO NOT NEED HIM HERE AND I DO NEED HIM IN ISRAEL. WE ARE GOING TO BUILD A HOUSE FOR TWO FAMILIES. REPORTEDLY REPLIED THE OFFICIAL: WE WILL LET HIM GO

IN TIME. (SUCH JOKING ALSO OCCURS OUTSIDE OVIR. THE
LADY RUSSIAN SUPERVISOR WHO HAS HIRED FOUR REFUSENIK
INSURANCE SALESMEN JOKED THAT THEY WOULD COST HER
HER OWN JOB.)

9. COMMENT: ON BALANCE, THE LAST TWO MONTHS HAVE
BEEN A HOPEFUL PERIOD FOR LOCAL REFUSENIKS. ALTHOUGH,
AS ONE OF THEM REPORTS, THE RECENT SURGE OF PER-
MISSIONS TO EMIGRATE MAY RELECT ONLY OVIR'S AWARENESS
OF NEED TO FULFILL THEIR "PLAN" BEFORE, NONETHELESS
THE NUMBER AND COMPOSITION OF THE GROUP WHO HAVE
RECEIVED EXIT PERMISSION HAVE PROVED HEARTENING.
EVEN THE APPARENT CAPRICIOUSNESS OF OVIR DECISIONS
CAN BE CONSTRUED TO ENCOURAGE HOPE. OLDER REFUSENIKS
ARE ENCOURAGED TO BELIEVE THAT SOONER OR LATER THEIR
TIME WILL COME WHEN SUCH SENIOR REFUSENIKS AS
LIBERMAN AND VINKOVETSKIY OBTAIN PERMISSION TO LEAVE.
NEWER REFUSENIKS, CONTEMPLATING THE BRIEF WAITING
PERIODS OF SUCH AS MALINSKIY AND KHOROSHANSKIY, MAY
FEEL THAT PERHAPS THEY WILL NOT HAVE TO WAIT AS LONG
AS THEY FEARED. THIS SURVIVAL OF HOPE AMONG THE
REFUSENIKS MAY MAKE THOSE WHO STILL CONTEMPLATE
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APPLYING FOR EMIGRATION MORE WILLING TO ACCEPT
REFUSENIK STATUS IF NECESSARY. AT THE SAME TIME,
THIS HOPE TENDS TO LEND ENCOURAGEMENT TO POLITICAL
ACTIVITY AMONG THE REFUSENIKS (SEPTTEL). END COMMENT.
NEUBERT

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